

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

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)  
In Re: Bair Hugger Forced Air ) File No. 15-MD-2666  
Warming Devices Products ) (JNE/FLN)  
Liability Litigation )  
)  
) Minneapolis, Minnesota  
) August 28, 2017  
) 9:59 a.m.  
)  
)  
)  
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BEFORE THE HONORABLE FRANKLIN L. NOEL  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT MAGISTRATE JUDGE  
**(MOTION HEARING)**

APPEARANCES

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transcript produced by computer.

**P R O C E E D I N G S**

**I N O P E N C O U R T**

THE COURT: Okay. This is in Re. Bairhugger Forced Air Warming Device Product Liability Litigation; 15-2666. Let's get everybody's appearance on the record. For the plaintiff.

MR. GORDON: Your Honor, Ben Gordon for the plaintiffs.

MS. ZIMMERMAN: Good morning, Your Honor. Genevieve Zimmerman for the plaintiffs.

THE COURT: Defendants.

MS. DAVIES: Good morning, Your Honor. Monica Davies on behalf of defendants.

MS. AHMANN: Bridget Ahmann on behalf of defendants.

THE COURT: Okay. So we're here for a hearing on the defendant's motion for disclosure of confidential communications with treating physicians. The moving party is defendant, correct?

MS. DAVIES: That's correct.

THE COURT: Who's up, Ms. Davies?

MS. DAVIES: Yes. Thank you, Your Honor. I would like to begin by addressing any confusion that there may be regarding what it is we're seeking, the context in which it arose, and the parties meet and confer efforts in that

1        regard. As the Court is aware, there has been a fair amount  
2        of discussion between the parties, as well as with the  
3        Court, in the context of questions regarding what  
4        communications or what contact defendants are allowed to  
5        have with treaters, whether they should be able to  
6        communicate with plaintiffs' treating physicians, whether  
7        for purposes of scheduling depositions or more substantive  
8        discussions.

9                Plaintiffs have maintained from the beginning, and  
10       my understanding is that they continue to maintain, that the  
11       treaters are basically off-limits for defendants outside the  
12       context of a formal deposition. We disagree, and we've had  
13       discussions about the legal application of whether it be  
14       under the physician-patient privilege or the Court's  
15       analysis of *Shady Grove* and the extent to which the  
16       Minnesota specific statute would apply here. We recognize  
17       that those are difficult issues and sensitive issues in  
18       light of the plaintiffs' medical conditions.

19               So in preparing to bring this motion before the  
20       Court, we've attempted to narrow what we're looking for so  
21       that we can best prepare, efficiently prepare for the  
22       depositions that we're going to have coming up in a very  
23       short amount of time, and that is simply what documents and  
24       information have the treaters been provided by plaintiffs or  
25       their counsel. We're not looking for substantive contact

1 with the treaters. We're not looking to get into any  
2 specifics regarding the plaintiffs' medical condition  
3 outside of what would normally be appropriate in the context  
4 of a deposition in this type of case.

5 We know from the *Walton* litigation that  
6 plaintiffs' counsel has previously at least attempted to  
7 educate treaters regarding their theories of the case and  
8 has worked with Dr. Augustine to try to find documents and  
9 literature that would be helpful to those theories. We can  
10 only assume that they would attempt to do the same thing  
11 here. We simply want to know what -- we want a level  
12 playing field. We want to know what it is that they've been  
13 provided so that we can adequately prepare for depositions  
14 going in.

15 Leaving aside other disputes that we may have over  
16 over the scope or the applicability of the physician-patient  
17 privilege and proceedings such as this, we don't think  
18 there's any basis to claim that it would apply to those  
19 sorts of communications. As I mentioned, and as the Court  
20 is well aware, we have a lot of discovery and a lot of  
21 depositions to get done in a very short timeframe and the  
22 treaters are on that list and of anybody who have the  
23 limit -- the most limited schedules in terms of what time  
24 we're going to be allowed to have with them.

25 We've asked for the information before, despite

1 plaintiffs' claim in their opposition that we haven't --

2 THE COURT: So where -- so let's talk about that.

3 MS. DAVIES: Sure.

4 THE COURT: Because that does appear to be a major  
5 dispute. What -- where do I find or what document requests  
6 or what interrogatory or what discovery device were these  
7 items requested?

8 MS. DAVIES: In our bellwether case-specific  
9 document request to each plaintiff. And substantially  
10 identical requests were served on everybody. There might be  
11 some differences in numbering between each different case,  
12 but I have, for example, the requests that were served upon  
13 Julie Kamke, and we asked produce all documents and/or  
14 communications, including correspondence or other written  
15 records, provided by you, your agents, or your attorneys to  
16 any witness in this litigation, including expert witnesses  
17 and nontestifying experts who are consultants, but it  
18 clearly encompasses any witness, and we would certainly  
19 maintain that that would include their treating physicians  
20 who were very likely to testify here.

21 THE COURT: So what were you reading from again,  
22 so that's the interrogatory -- or the document request to  
23 who?

24 MS. DAVIES: Julie Kamke, the first bellwether  
25 case that's teed up.

1 THE COURT: Okay. And what document request no.  
2 was it?

3 MS. DAVIES: It is request No. 15.

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 MS. DAVIES: And I brought with me, just in case,  
6 I brought with me copies of our response -- or our requests  
7 as well as the responses served by Ms. Kamke.

8 THE COURT: Okay. And what was the response?

9 MS. DAVIES: They objected on the grounds of -- or  
10 she objected on the grounds of work product privilege and  
11 referred us to expert reports.

12 THE COURT: Okay.

13 MS. DAVIES: And, you know, quite frankly, we  
14 recognize, as is the case with so many of these issues and  
15 these motions, there are probably lot a different procedural  
16 mechanisms that we could use to bring these issues before  
17 the Court. We were in the context of discussions about the  
18 applicability of the, you know, the privilege that applies  
19 to plaintiffs' treaters and the extent to which we can  
20 communicate with them. We wanted to talk to them ourselves.  
21 The plaintiffs have taken the position we can't. We  
22 disagree, but we are trying to find a way through it. We're  
23 not going to talk to them ourselves and ask for this  
24 information, then you give it to us, plaintiffs, please.

25 We're -- we didn't -- we weren't looking to tee up

1 any kind of discovery fight or motion to compel. We can  
2 certainly go down that road if we have to. But the issue  
3 that we're here before the Court on we think is very  
4 discrete and can be dealt with in a much more efficient  
5 manner, and that's simply whether we're entitled to at least  
6 know what documents and information are being provided to  
7 these witnesses in advance of their depositions.

8 And with that, unless Your Honor has any other  
9 questions, I think --

10 THE COURT: I guess the only other question I have  
11 is --

12 MS. DAVIES: Sure.

13 THE COURT: -- if we do get into the question of  
14 privilege, why doesn't Rule -- Federal Rule 501 govern this  
15 whole thing?

16 MS. DAVIES: I would submit that -- I -- we're  
17 talking about discovery versus evidence and the  
18 admissibility of it. I mean, regarding the privilege  
19 itself, we would maintain that because of the nature of  
20 these cases and the fact that it is the plaintiffs' medical  
21 condition that is at the heart of it that they have waived  
22 that privilege.

23 And from a procedural standpoint, we're simply  
24 looking for the same access that Rule 26 would otherwise  
25 provide. So our position with respect to the confluence of

1 the federal rules and the Minnesota physician privilege  
2 statute is that, procedurally, we should be looking at Rule  
3 26 in terms of what access to discovery and information we  
4 have, and to the extent that we need to have evidentiary  
5 fights based on what information is discovered, we could  
6 cross that bridge when we come to it.

7 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

8 MS. DAVIES: Thank you.

9 MR. GORDON: Good morning, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Mr. Gordan.

11 MR. GORDON: Ben Gordan for the plaintiffs. Thank  
12 you. Let me say first, Your Honor, I'm -- counsel for  
13 defense indicated that they were -- there was some confusion  
14 that she was hoping to clear up over this matter, and I  
15 remain a little confused, although I understand, based on  
16 her comments, that it seems to be a little narrower,  
17 perhaps, than some of the statements in their memorandum.  
18 But if I can just cut right to the -- well, let me say  
19 preliminary, in terms of the meet and confer statement,  
20 which I understand to be a rule that is required that we  
21 meet and confer on these issues, I assume or I infer from  
22 her comments, counsel's comments, that the meet and confer  
23 is to be inferred here from the request to produce on case  
24 specific matters to Ms. Kamke that she mentioned relating to  
25 other witnesses, information from other witnesses.



1 I'm not sure that's a fair characterization, I'm  
2 not sure it's a fair inference, and the statement that was  
3 filed in the court was very clear that there was a meet and  
4 conferral on this specific issue of disclosure, specifically  
5 of documents that counsel may have given to plaintiffs'  
6 treating physicians. That hasn't happened. There's been no  
7 such meet and confer. I checked the transcript last week  
8 carefully and cited in my response memorandum to portions of  
9 it that might seem to cover that area, and I didn't see  
10 anything that could obliquely be construed to ask us for  
11 that information. I don't believe there's been an  
12 appropriate request.

13 But to the extent that the request, No. 15, that  
14 Ms. Davies mentioned is construed to include treating  
15 physicians, I would argue, Your Honor, that those witnesses,  
16 as case law in this district has pointed out, including the  
17 *Baycol* MDL decision, are very different from ordinary fact  
18 witnesses and the fact that Minnesota statutes specifically  
19 and Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure specifically create  
20 that substantive right to privilege of those conversations  
21 and those discussions between plaintiffs' counsel and  
22 treating physicians for the plaintiffs in the case and the  
23 procedure that defines the parameters of any such waiver.  
24 And to that point, there has been a limited waiver in *Kamke*  
25 and *Nugier* and the other cases, but it is very definite and

1 very limited, and, of course, prescribed. And given  
2 Minnesota rules on that, I don't believe it can be  
3 reasonably said that plaintiffs have waived their rights  
4 under Minnesota substantive law.

5 And so while I'm happy to get into the question of  
6 whether Federal Rule of Evidence 501 should govern here and  
7 whether Minnesota law creates a rule of decision that I  
8 believe it does, Your Honor, that's been recognized by this  
9 district, I believe preliminarily the defendant's motion is  
10 improper and that there hasn't been a proper meet and confer  
11 that's happened and we haven't been given an appropriate  
12 opportunity to respond to a specific request for such  
13 communications.

14 But that said, given expediency and the  
15 efficiencies that we all know and talk about with MDLs, I'm  
16 certainly prepared to say, Your Honor, while I don't know  
17 that it's a fair assumption, as counsel said, she said we  
18 only can assume that conversations that took place in the  
19 underlying *Walton* case have -- or conduct that may have  
20 taken place in that case may have taken place in this case,  
21 I think if we want to, you know, jump that hurdle and talk  
22 about the substance of that, it's important to recognize on  
23 the merits that any conversations that counsel has with  
24 treating physicians are substantively protected under  
25 Minnesota privilege law, under Statute 595.02.

1           And that counsel talked about wanting to be able  
2           to be on an even playing field, the fact is, and the cases  
3           talk about this, it's not an even playing field with respect  
4           to whether or not Minnesota law recognizes a statutory  
5           privilege for these conversations, and that right is in  
6           violate, and our -- the duties for that, the reasons for  
7           that law and that duty are talked about in great detail in  
8           the *Baycol* decision and in other decisions.

9           And if we get into talking about other MDLs and  
10          other minority positions like the *Zimmer NexGen* case, those  
11          cases are very specifically limited to the confines and the  
12          specific facts of those cases in terms of trying to find  
13          treating physicians for -- or talk about physicians for  
14          expert witnesses. I don't think we're there yet.

15          But my basic, you know, concluding response, Your  
16          Honor, at this point is that Minnesota law governs here and  
17          that there shouldn't be any encouraging under *Shady Grove*  
18          into that law.

19          THE COURT: So why, other than the cases in Ramsey  
20          County that are assigned to Judge Leary, why does Minnesota  
21          law apply to any of these cases? In other words, as I  
22          understand Rule 501, it says in a civil case where state law  
23          provides the rule of decision, that's the privilege rule  
24          that would apply, and so don't we have to look at all  
25          3,500 cases and figure out what state law is going to govern

1 in each of those cases to determine what the privilege law  
2 is in each of those cases?

3 MR. GORDON: I think ultimately that's true, Your  
4 Honor. I think it is a state by state analysis, and --

5 THE COURT: And I would assume every state has  
6 some kind of waiver notion for privilege, and why hasn't it  
7 been waived in every state by reason of the fact that you've  
8 put your clients' medical condition at issue and therefore a  
9 treating physicians' opinion about that has to be explored,  
10 doesn't it?

11 MR. GORDON: Well, the opportunity to explore it,  
12 Your Honor, as the cases discuss, is at -- is in the  
13 deposition setting, and those states like Minnesota  
14 specifically define what the limits of such limited waivers  
15 are. And in this instance, it is very clear and specific  
16 what the plaintiffs have waived and what they have not  
17 waived.

18 And, again, those decisions, including the *Baycol*  
19 decision, the *NHL* decision in this district, talk about the  
20 policy reasons for that, and it's bound up in the sanctity  
21 of the privacy of the patients' medical records and the  
22 relationship with the patient and the physician and the  
23 protections built in, both for the patient and the physician  
24 under that law. And yes, that varies state by state. And  
25 that is -- I realize we are in an MDL setting, but there

1 have been many decisions, Your Honor, from *Vioxx* and others  
2 forward, all the way most recently with the *Xarelto*  
3 decision, that speak specifically to how that can be  
4 handled. And if there are situations where there need to be  
5 conversations between defense counsel and the plaintiffs'  
6 treating physicians, number one, they should be limited to  
7 the deposition setting. But number two, if there is a  
8 stated reason by the defendants of need for something beyond  
9 that, that can be done in a way that comports with state  
10 law. That's something the Court can look at and other  
11 courts have.

12 And specifically, in the *NextGen* case by Judge  
13 Pallmeyer, the judge very carefully limited to the specific  
14 facts of that case what the basis for her opinion was that  
15 there should be these limited conversations with plaintiffs'  
16 treating physicians on an ex parte basis. And Your Honor,  
17 factually it's important there because they were looking at  
18 a case where there were knee surgeons who were very few in  
19 number, I think she mentioned 250 perhaps the defendants  
20 argued might be the total number of available specialists in  
21 knee surgery. So the defense argument there, very  
22 specifically, which 3M has not made here, was that they had  
23 to have some ability to reach out to treating physicians who  
24 could be potential experts for them; whereas here, Your  
25 Honor, there are thousands of anesthesiologists,

1 biosafety engineers, orthopedic surgeons, and others who 3M  
2 could reach out to and, in fact, has, to be experts in this  
3 case. In fact, Your Honor, 3M has named almost twice the  
4 number of expert witnesses that plaintiffs have in this  
5 case.

6 There's been no claim, I don't think there can be  
7 a claim, that 3M has some necessity to have to reach out to  
8 plaintiffs' treating physicians that would give them -- you  
9 know, that they have a need for expert witnesses that would  
10 give them a reason to ask the Court to create an exception  
11 or to limit the scope of the physician-patient privilege  
12 recognized by Minnesota Statute 595.

13 THE COURT: And document request 15 in the Kamke  
14 case, in your estimation, only goes to what?

15 MR. GORDON: Your Honor, I don't have the specific  
16 language in front of me. I tried to write it down. And I  
17 would perhaps have to take a look at it if counsel has an  
18 extra copy.

19 (Counsel conferred.)

20 MR. GORDON: As I recalled, let me -- if you may  
21 indulge me for one moment, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Sure.

23 MR. GORDON: All communications, including  
24 correspondence, other written records provided by you, your  
25 agents, or attorneys to any witness in this litigation. I

1 would -- including expert witnesses and nontestifying  
2 experts or consultants. The fact that plaintiffs' treating  
3 physicians are a special, unique type of witness in this  
4 case, as recognized by Minnesota substantive law -- and I  
5 forget which case it is, Your Honor. I have to go back and  
6 look. I believe it's *Baycol*, probably others, that  
7 discussed that and the rationale for those witnesses not  
8 being treated as ordinary fact witnesses. So in the case of  
9 other third-party witnesses, this privilege wouldn't apply.

10 The reason that we believe this is -- this request  
11 doesn't apply to plaintiffs' treating physicians is that  
12 they have this privilege recognized by the law and that is  
13 to be protected in violate under the case law, unless there  
14 is some reason for them to get around that privilege.

15 And, again, we would argue that *Shady Grove* is  
16 inapplicable here, that under Erie analysis, that if this is  
17 not outcome determinative, Your Honor, it is at least  
18 outcome influential or impactful. And the fact that in the  
19 case law, including the Erie analysis under the *NextGen*  
20 decision, talks at great length about the reasons that it  
21 should be -- determined to be outcome determinative or not,  
22 here, Your Honor, it is bound up in the patients' treatment  
23 and core medical claims in this case. And so to say that  
24 federal procedure is all that we're talking about here I  
25 think misses the gravamen of the discussion in the *Baycol*

1 cases or the other cases. I think the core discussion  
2 concerning Minnesota procedure makes clear when they talk  
3 about 35.04, Minnesota Rule of Civil Procedure, that it's  
4 more than mere procedure. It's more than routine procedure.  
5 We're talking about a procedure that goes to the very heart  
6 of the plaintiffs' medical treatment which is fundamentally  
7 where their claims live and die.

8 THE COURT: But as I understand it, the request  
9 and plaintiff -- and defendant contend that this request  
10 No. 15 encompasses what they're looking for here, which is  
11 simply communications from plaintiffs' lawyer to the  
12 treating physician witness, so it doesn't really have  
13 anything to do communications between the patient and their  
14 physician or between the physician and the plaintiff. It's  
15 simply the lawyer's communication to the witness. And by my  
16 reading of the whole Erie line of cases and the Federal  
17 Rules of Civil Procedure and the Federal Rules of Evidence,  
18 this is all governed by Rule 501, which, by its terms, then  
19 says you go look at the state law to determine what the  
20 privilege is. And so what law governs Kamke and Newger?

21 MR. GORDON: Well, Your Honor, I -- obviously  
22 I -- the state law for those plaintiffs would be the states  
23 from which they hail, and in the case of Ms. Kamke it's  
24 Wisconsin and in the case of Mr. Newger it's Florida. And I  
25 agree that the laws of those states would govern under Rule



1 501 and create the rule of decision -- pardon me -- for  
2 those states, and, you know, so to the extent that we need  
3 to look at Florida, I think we can look at the Florida  
4 analysis. The statute I think is substantially similar in  
5 terms of the protection to patients' communications through  
6 agents or otherwise but physicians.

7 And on that point, Your Honor, I think to the  
8 extent that this request, and, again, I'm not sure I read it  
9 as broadly or specifically as requesting communications  
10 between patients and their agents and physicians, but in  
11 this case, we, as attorneys, who may have had -- and without  
12 admitting for the moment, Your Honor, that we've had any  
13 such written communications with any doctor in the Kamke or  
14 Newger cases, if we have or if we had, I -- our argument  
15 would be that we -- those would be protected, and to the  
16 extent that they are concerning the patient and their  
17 relationship with that physician, the communications would  
18 be protected just as though they were communications by the  
19 -- from the patient to the physician themselves.

20 THE COURT: And is it your contention that the  
21 only -- or that the extent of any waiver is set forth fully  
22 in the HIPAA authorizations that each client signed with  
23 their plaintiff fact sheets?

24 MR. GORDON: Yes, Your Honor. I mean, unless,  
25 without knowing as I stand here now, there's any additional

1 room for discussion of waiver under Wisconsin or Florida  
2 law, then yes, I believe those waivers are limited on their  
3 face, they were agreed to by the parties, and that counsel  
4 should not be allowed to seek discussions between patients  
5 and their physicians or patients' representatives and their  
6 physicians outside of the deposition context.

7 THE COURT: And where do I find the text of these  
8 authorizations?

9 MR. GORDON: I, Your Honor, I have those, and I  
10 don't believe I brought hard copies, but I can  
11 certainly -- they were --

12 THE COURT: Or they're all the same, correct, for  
13 each plaintiff? I mean, it's a form thing that is part of a  
14 pre-trial order?

15 MR. GORDON: Yes, Your Honor. I'm trying to  
16 recall. My inclination is to say yes, Ms. Zimmerman is  
17 helping, but I thought I recalled on Newger and Ms. Kamke  
18 there was some difference, am I mistaken?

19 MS. ZIMMERMAN: I don't believe so. Sometimes  
20 individual hospitals require, for example, the Mayo Clinic  
21 has its own mandated authorization, but the authorizations  
22 mandated in this MDL I believe appear as exhibits to  
23 pre-trial order No. 14. I think that's the pretrial order.

24 MR. GORDON: That's right.

25 THE COURT: Okay.

1 MR. GORDON: And I have copies, Your Honor,  
2 electronically that we can pull up and e-mail to the Court  
3 if you wish.

4 THE COURT: And -- no, that's okay. If it's an  
5 exhibit to pre-trial order 14, I can find that. I'll confer  
6 with defense counsel and see if she agrees.

7 And what is the Florida statute section that's the  
8 equivalent of the Minnesota statute that we were talking  
9 about?

10 MR. GORDON: One moment, Your Honor. I can give  
11 that to you. And then you're going to ask me for Wisconsin  
12 next, and I'm --

13 THE COURT: Probably. But since you're from  
14 Florida, I assumed you might have had this one on the tip of  
15 your tongue.

16 MR. GORDON: And I should have, Your Honor. It's  
17 sad that I'm more familiar with Minnesota law on this right  
18 now than I am Florida. But because of analysis that was  
19 recently done, I do recall the discussion on Florida, but  
20 the statute number is escaping me right at this moment. I  
21 can have it for you. It's, I'm sorry, 456.057, paren 8.

22 THE COURT: 456.057, paren 8?

23 MR. GORDON: Yes, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: Okay. Okay. Anything else?

25 MR. GORDON: Not at this time, Your Honor. Other

1       than to say that, again, I realize time is of the essence.  
2       You know, I do think it's a bit of an unusual position for  
3       us to be in procedurally when I don't believe we've truly  
4       had a request. If you look at just the language of their  
5       motions, they ask for disclosure of documents that they  
6       haven't specifically requested in our view.

7               THE COURT: And in response to, for example,  
8       Kamke, No. 15, was anything produced or was it just an  
9       assertion of the privilege and no further documents or was  
10      one of those --

11             MR. GORDON: I'm going look to Ms. Zimmerman.

12             THE COURT: -- despite the warning or despite the  
13      privilege, blah, blah, blah, we now give you these?

14             MR. GORDON: With respect to 15 specifically, I'm  
15      hoping Ms. Zimmerman knows, Your Honor.

16             MS. ZIMMERMAN: Your Honor, we asserted a broad  
17      objection at the beginning of all of the responses that we  
18      made. We answered and we referred to the expert reports  
19      that were produced prior to the production of these  
20      particular discovery responses.

21             And again, we haven't met and conferred such that  
22      a motion to compel would be appropriate here. I mean, we  
23      didn't know until this morning which requests it was they  
24      thought that we had not been appropriately responsive to.

25             THE COURT: Okay.

1 MR. GORDON: And that's really -- thank you,  
2 Ms. Zimmerman. The point is that if we'd had a real  
3 opportunity to meet and confer specifically on the requests  
4 they were talking about, I wasn't sure where that was coming  
5 from. We didn't talk about it last week leading up to this  
6 so I didn't know exactly. And that request, 15, I mean, I  
7 think our response is that there's nothing that's not  
8 non-privileged that's responsive to that request.

9 THE COURT: Okay.

10 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: Ms. Davies, anything else?

12 MS. DAVIES: Yes, just very briefly, if I could.  
13 I'll start at the end. The reason that we brought up the  
14 discovery request in the first place is only because in  
15 responding to our motion, plaintiffs took the position that  
16 this -- that we had never asked for this in discovery. As I  
17 mentioned, we're not looking for a discovery fight. We're  
18 hoping to avoid one. And we think this issue is much more  
19 discrete than maybe what we've even been talking about here.  
20 So at the risk -- you know, to the extent that our motion  
21 papers were not clear, I apologize to the extent that's the  
22 case. The parties have different interpretations of the  
23 scope of the privilege, and we recognize those are  
24 sensitive, difficult issues and that time is of the essence.

25 What we're trying to do now, and what we've

1 requested in our motion, is, in our view, a much narrower  
2 request than what we originally asked for and met and  
3 conferred on with respect to contact with treaters. And at  
4 this point, we're not looking to reach out to treaters  
5 directly. We won't contact them without -- outside of  
6 getting depositions on the calendar and communicating with  
7 them in the deposition, we're not looking to have any kind  
8 of substantive communication with them. We're not even  
9 asking for documents or information relating to any specific  
10 plaintiff or their medical condition as it might relate to  
11 communications with a particular treater.

12 What we want to know before we go into depositions  
13 is what, if any, documents that plaintiffs' counsel have  
14 provided these treaters, whether in an attempt to educate  
15 them or otherwise; for example, if plaintiff's counsel were  
16 to, and I'm using this only as an example, I have no reason  
17 to believe this is or is not the case, but if plaintiffs'  
18 counsel were to hand a copy of the McGovern study to one of  
19 these treaters or any number of the articles or other  
20 literature put together by Dr. Augustine, I can't fathom a  
21 basis on which the physician-client privilege -- the  
22 physician-patient privilege would even come into play, and I  
23 can't imagine any reason why that wouldn't be information  
24 that we would be entitled to prior to going to the  
25 deposition and potentially run the risk of being back before

1 Your Honor in the context of additional deposition time or  
2 discovery.

3 THE COURT: Is it your contention that the waiver  
4 of whatever physician-patient privilege might exist is  
5 broader than the HIPAA authorizations that each plaintiff  
6 signed in connection with their plaintiff fact sheets?

7 MS. DAVIES: I have to confess, I'm not -- I don't  
8 have the language of the HIPAA authorization top of mind,  
9 but our position is that because the plaintiffs have put  
10 their medical condition at issue in these proceedings that  
11 the privilege is waived, we're entitled to take discovery  
12 from physicians, from treaters, from the hospitals, from  
13 anesthesiologists, and we have -- we've got the plaintiff's  
14 medical records. That, in our view, is not what the issue  
15 is here. It's simply, you know -- and again, we're taking a  
16 step back from our position that we should be able to have  
17 conversations with these treaters, and we would view that  
18 because of the plaintiffs putting their medical condition at  
19 issue in this case, we would take the position that we would  
20 otherwise be entitled to speak with those treating  
21 physicians regarding plaintiffs' medical condition and the  
22 facts and factors relevant to the damages that they're  
23 claiming in these proceedings, but we're  
24 not -- we've -- we've stepped back from that. We're not  
25 asking for that. We're not asking for any patient specific

1 or plaintiff specific information at all at this point.

2 THE COURT: Is Ms. Zimmerman correct that the  
3 HIPAA authorization is found attached to pre-trial order No.  
4 14?

5 MS. DAVIES: I believe that is the case. I  
6 can't -- I have no reason to disagree with it at this point,  
7 but I would have to confirm.

8 THE COURT: And do you happen to know what the  
9 Wisconsin statute is that's equivalent, if there is one, to  
10 Minnesota 595.02?

11 MS. DAVIES: I do not.

12 THE COURT: And do you whether Mr. Gordon has  
13 correctly identified the Florida statute?

14 MS. DAVIES: I have -- again, I have not looked  
15 into the Florida -- that provision, but I have no reason to  
16 dispute that he did.

17 THE COURT: Okay. Anything else?

18 MS. DAVIES: No.

19 THE COURT: Okay.

20 MS. DAVIES: Thank you.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 MR. GORDON: Can I respond briefly, Your Honor?

23 THE COURT: Only if you're going to give me the  
24 Wisconsin statute.

25 MR. GORDON: We are working on it as we speak,



1 Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: All right. Here's what we're going to  
3 do. Before the day is out, meet and confer and see if you  
4 can reach agreement now that you know what document requests  
5 they say you haven't complied with and let me know by close  
6 of business if you've reached an agreement, and if you have  
7 not, I will issue an order ruling on the motion that is  
8 before me.

9 MR. GORDON: Your Honor, if I may, thank you. In  
10 anticipation of possibly not being able to work it out and  
11 while we're waiting for the Wisconsin statute, can I give  
12 you one more citation to consider when you make your ruling?

13 THE COURT: One more citation to what?

14 MR. GORDON: For the proposition in response to  
15 what Ms. Davies just said a moment ago about their -- it  
16 being unfair essentially for them not being able to speak  
17 with the physicians and know what the physicians --

18 THE COURT: I think I understand that issue and  
19 understand everybody's position. What I'm more interested  
20 in is exactly what state's privilege laws might actually I  
21 might have to learn and talk about.

22 MR. GORDON: Understood, Your Honor. We'll find  
23 that for you hopefully momentarily.

24 THE COURT: All right. We are in recess.

25 MR. GORDON: Thank you, Your Honor.

1 MS. DAVIES: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 (Proceedings concluded at 10:31 a.m.)

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7 I, Staci A. Heichert, certify that the foregoing is  
8 a correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the  
9 above-entitled matter.

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11 Certified by: s/ Staci A. Heichert

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Staci A. Heichert,  
RDR, CRR, CRC

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